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THE LITERARY LEVIATHAN.

Who has not heard of the great leviathan of literature—the St Domingan Marquis de la Pailletterie, the Algerian lion-hunter, the protector of Abd-el-Kader—who, for nearly twenty years, produced dramas, romances, histories, travels, at the rate of forty volumes per annum, and whose career makes the list complete by being in itself a most instructive sermon! Has he not, in his own amusing *bavardage*, told the world of the number of amanuenses he worked out in the course of twenty-four hours—of the relays of couriers constantly employed spurring in hot haste with the manuscript productions of his fertile brain from his country-seat to the printing-offices of Paris! Yet now, when the bubble has burst, when we know as an established and uncontradicted—simply because uncontradictable—fact, that not one-twentieth of the works bearing the words *par Alexandre Dumas* on their title-pages were written by that individual; and that the major part of even this small minority are, without the slightest acknowledgment, copied, to a greater or less extent, from the works of other authors, we are forced to infer, as Trinculo did of Caliban, that the great leviathan is but a very shallow monster after all.

In an article which appeared some years since in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, M. Dumas relates how he became a dramatic author. He was, he tells us, a clerk in the service of the Duke of Orleans—afterwards King Louis-Philippe—at the humble salary of 1200 francs a year, when on the occasion of an English theatrical company visiting Paris, he first saw the plays of Shakspeare performed. Like a person who had been born blind—the simile is his own—and to whom, after arriving at the age of manhood, sight by some miracle had been given, Dumas at once found himself in a new world, of which he never previously had the slightest idea. As the Italian peasant said when he first saw a picture: 'I, too, will be a painter,' so did Dumas exclaim when he first saw *Hamlet*: 'I, too, will be a dramatic author.' His earlier essays, however, were unsuccessful; but the occurrence of a great event soon opened up a pathway leading him to fame and fortune. The memorable three days of July 1830 effected a dramatic as well as a political revolution. Excited by the sanguinary contest, and wearied to satiety with the heavy dramas of Corneille and Racine, patronised by the Bourbon dynasty, the Parisian audiences were ripe for a more stimulating style of theatrical representation. The hour had arrived, and the man was not wanting. The *Henry III.* of Dumas appearing about this period, carried Paris, as it were, by storm. The classical

formalities of the old school succumbed at once to the rope-ladders, poisoned goblets, stiletos, brigands, and executioners of the new romantic drama. *Christine*, and one or two other dramas of a similar romantic description, written by M. Dumas, following in quick succession, were put upon the stage with a pomp and circumstance previously unknown, even in Paris, and were welcomed with rapturous applause by crowded audiences. As mere acting pieces, these plays are not devoid of a certain degree of merit. Gratifying the eye rather than the intellect, they display considerable inventive faculty, keen perception of contrast, and decided knowledge of theatrical effect; arresting the attention of the auditor by surprise, and keeping his curiosity ever in suspense, without attempting to hold the mirror up to nature—

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, or to mend the heart.

The Parisian audiences, however, were satisfied with the quality of the fare provided for their amusement, but not with its quantity. Their appetite increasing upon what it fed upon, they demanded more. The managers were eager to take advantage of the new flood that led so rapidly to fortune; but the demand exceeded the supply; consequently, Messrs Anicet Bourgeois, Auguste Maquet, and others, were enlisted under the banners of the already famous Dumas, and scores of plays were thus produced, all bearing the name of the great chief. How the large sum of money paid for these dramas was divided among their authors, is a secret of the *atelier* never yet revealed; but it is known that Dumas had the lion's share of the cash, and all the honour. Indeed, one of the best of this crowd of dramas, *Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*, M. Dumas transcribed in his own handwriting, and sent the precious autograph to Christina, queen-dowager of Spain; and her most Catholic Majesty sent back, in return, the cordon of the Order of Isabella—an honour of which M. Dumas was most vain-gloriously proud, as his own writings amply testify: yet *Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle* was not written by M. Dumas at all, but by one of his literary retainers, a young Pole, then struggling for a precarious existence in the French metropolis, but now Count Walewski, the distinguished statesman of the present Empire.

But the worst has to be told. Few, if any, of the numerous dramas bearing the name of Dumas, whether written by himself or his assistants, are original, the greater part of them being made up, more or less, from the works of other writers. As an instance, M. Dumas, probably in gratitude to Shakspeare for rescuing him from dramatic blindness, produced his own *Hamlet*,

which is merely a mutilated translation of the original, with the questionable *improvement*, that the ghost, appearing in the last act, restores Hamlet to a long life and undisputed possession of the throne of Denmark!

Numerous other wholesale plagiarisms of a similar description were not suffered to pass unnoticed, and it is but fair to M. Dumas that we should here give his very characteristic reply to such charges: 'It is not any man,' he says, 'but mankind, that invents. Every one, in his appointed season, possessing himself of the things known to his fathers, turns them over, places them in new combinations, and thus, having added certain particles to the sum of human happiness, is peacefully gathered to his sires.' After most profanely quoting that God made man in His own image, to prove the absolute impossibility of invention, M. Dumas thus continues: 'This consideration it was that made Shakspeare reply to the reproach of a stupid critic, that he had taken more than one scene bodily from a contemporary author: "It is a maiden whom I have withdrawn from bad to introduce into good company." This it was that made Molière say, with still more naïveté: "I seize upon my own, wherever I find it." And Shakspeare and Molière were both right; for the man of true genius never steals—he conquers. He seizes a province—he annexes it to his realms—it becomes an intrinsic part of his empire; he peoples it with his subjects, and extends over it his sceptre of gold. I find myself compelled to speak in this manner, because, far from receiving from certain critics the applause I merit, they accuse me of plagiarism—they point me out as a thief. I have at least the reflection to console myself with, that my enemies, like those who attacked Shakspeare and Molière, are so obscure that memory will not preserve their names.'

With all due deference to M. Dumas, we are afraid that the anecdotes he cites of Shakspeare and Molière militate against his non-inventive theory, as they really appear to be proofs of at least his own powers of invention. We all know the old story of Alexander the Great and the robber—the plunderer of kingdoms was a hero; the petty pilferer of a henroost, merely a thief. Surely, Alexandre Dumas, the hero of we do not know how many hundred volumes, must have been thinking of his great namesake of Macedon when he penned the above lines. Spirit-rappers and mediums alone can inform us how the shades of Shakspeare, Molière, Goethe, Schiller, Kotzebue, Lope de Vega, Calderon de la Barca, Walter Scott, and other departed celebrities, rejoice under the conquering sceptre of Dumas. But we can readily fancy how wretched Jules Janin, William Thackeray, Granier de Chassagnac, and other living authors, must feel at the idea of being known only to posterity as the petty assailants of the united Shakspeare and Molière of the nineteenth century!

It is, however, by his romances that M. Dumas is best known in England, either as an honest author, or, as he phrases it, a conqueror. The popularity of the dramas issued in his name soon made him one of the notoriety of Paris; and the proprietors of the Parisian journals being as anxious to have his productions in their columns as the people were to read them, from a dramatic author, M. Dumas became a *feuilletonist*. To explain the term, it is necessary to observe that many of the Parisian journals have a supplement to their *sheet*, carried on from page to page—and separated by a black line from the political and miscellaneous matter—containing a few chapters of a romance, written by the most popular writer the editor can procure. Most of the romances bearing the name of Dumas were first published in this manner; and we may add, that it is a very remunerative mode for the author, as the proprietor of the journal pays liberally for what the majority of his subscribers consider the most interesting part of his

paper, and the author has the additional advantage of gaining by the separate publication of his work, in the book-form, after its completion in the *feuilletons*.

The first romances of M. Dumas, published in *feuilletons*, were *La Salle d'Armes*, *La Rose Rouge*, *Isabel de Bavaire*, and *Le Capitaine Paul*. *La Salle d'Armes* is original; so is *La Rose Rouge*, and a charming little tale to boot; but M. Dumas had previously published it in the book-form, under the title of *Blanche de Beaulieu*. *Isabel de Bavaire* is partly taken from a forgotten story of the same name published by Arnould in 1821; and *Le Capitaine Paul* is a veritable conquest and annexation of Cooper's *Pilot*—Dumas coolly taking up the thread of the American novelist's story, and, wherever he can find room, stringing on to it the false sentiments and flimsy incidents of his own invention.

Alexander the Great conquered the land, but the modern Alexandre extended his dominion over the deep. In 1840, M. Dumas published *Vie et Aventures de John Davys*. This is an English nautical story, and, in our opinion, formed a remarkable conquest. Few English landmen, if any, could write a nautical story ship-shape enough to pass muster among seafaring men. Leaving Defoe out of the question, the best attempts of this description—*The Cruise of the Midge*, &c.—were written by a clever compositor, who had had some little experience in a Leith smack; but when weighed in the nautical balance, these works were found sadly wanting. What are we to think, then, of a French landsman correctly depicting the feelings, habits, and nautical skill of an English sailor—describing the etiquette of an English ship-of-war, from the captain in his regal state, on the sacred weather-side of the quarter-deck, down to the lubberly loblolly-boy crawling in the lee-scuppers—detailing, what is technically termed, the ship's duty, from the time the hands are turned out by the shrill whistle of the boatswain in the early morning, till the hammocks are piped down at seven bells! It really is astonishing. The battle, storm, and wreck are also ably and nautically depicted. But, as worthy Dr Primrose said to that ingenious rogue, Mr Jenkins, have we not heard all this before? Is not this battle-piece in *Peter Simple*, this storm in *Newton Foster*? Oh, we see it now—M. Dumas has merely been conquering Captain Marryat; another province, the wide ocean itself, has fallen to his golden, or rather gold-creating sceptre.

The public demand for the romances of M. Dumas soon equalled the previous run upon his dramas, and was met in a similar manner. A number of assistants were employed; and it is an indisputable fact, that by these assistants were written the very best of the romances which were given to the world as the works of Alexandre Dumas. Among many others we may allude only to *Georges*, written by M. Mallefille; *Fernande*, by M. Auger; *Une Fille de Regent*, by M. Couhalhaic; and *Sylcandre*, by M. Maquet. These works, however, were but little known out of France; it was *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *Monte Christo* that gave Dumas a world-wide reputation, though he actually did not write a line of either of them. *The Three Musketeers*—we use its English title, for it is well known by translations both in England and America—was written by M. Maquet. We place the word written in italics, for the work is one of the very grossest of plagiarisms. Previous to the historical romance coming into vogue, what may be termed romantic biographies were written, in which the lives of real historical characters were treated in a romantic manner. One Gatien de Courtlitz, a writer of romantic biographies in the early part of the last century, hit upon the very excellent subject of the life of M. d'Artagnan, from his departure when a poor lad from Béarn, his native place, to his high elevation at the French court as captain of the royal musketeers, and

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prime favourite of Cardinal Mazarin, and to his glorious death in the trenches at the siege of Maestricht. Accordingly, in 1701, Courtlitz published his *Mémoires de M. d'Artagnan*—a romance, be it remembered, founded on a real life—and introduced into the work the fictitious characters Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, their intrigues, duels, amours, drinking-bouts, and gambling matches, since so well known to the readers of *The Three Musketeers*. In fact, Maquet did not task his invention for a single incident; he did not even alter the names of the leading characters; he merely modernised the style of part of the original *Mémoires*. But as the work of Courtlitz is not very rare—we have met with it on London book-stalls—Maquet, to put his readers on a false scent, alludes in his preface to the *Mémoires*, but in a light, careless manner, as if merely incidental to a more elaborate reference he makes to a certain manuscript life of a Count de la Fere, which he discovered in the Royal Library at Paris. This manuscript has been sought for, but in vain. It never had an existence, save in the too cunning mind's-eye of M. Maquet. Probably M. Dumas himself was imposed upon with respect to the originality of *The Three Musketeers*, for he never saw the work until it was printed. It appears that when M. Maquet was making it, he one evening supped with some brother litterateurs, and the conversation turning upon the book-manufacture of M. Dumas, a friend asked Maquet why he did not write in his own name.

The reply was: 'Monsieur Dumas pays me more for my writings than the publishers would.'

'But,' said another, 'Monsieur Dumas always re-writes, or at least corrects, the works written by others which he issues as his own.'

'Not at all,' said Maquet; 'and as a proof he does not, I will introduce into the manuscript of the work I am at present engaged upon the most awkward paragraph in the French language. I will repeat the word *que* sixteen times in five lines, and I will bet you a dozen of champagne that the whole sixteen will be found in the printed work.'

The bet was taken, and M. Maquet won it. The sixteen repetitions of *que* are still extant in five lines of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*.

Another laughable proof that M. Dumas did not read some of the works he issued as his own before they were printed, is found in *Amaury*, written by M. Meurice. When *Amaury* was written, Meurice was a new recruit in the noble army of authors headed by Dumas. Wishing privately to flatter the great chief, and never for a moment supposing that he would not read over and expunge the words from the manuscript, Meurice, in the work, boldly called upon the French Academy to open its doors to the immortal genius of Dumas. As Dumas did not read the manuscript, the words were not expunged; so, when *Amaury* came out, all Paris was in laughter to find M. Dumas in his own work calling on the Academy to open its doors to his own immortal genius.

To return to the *Musketeers*. The memoirs of D'Artagnan were a rich mine for the firm of Dumas & Co. By carefully spreading out the smallest possible quantity of type over the greatest possible extent of paper, *Les Trois Mousquetaires* was stretched out to eight octavo volumes; then followed its sequel, *Vingt Ans Après*, written by Maquet, in ten volumes; then, as a sequel to the sequel, *Le Viscont de Bragelonne*, also by Maquet, in six volumes—all drawn from the same prolific source. Thus the three duodecimo volumes of the original memoirs were transmuted into twenty-four octavo volumes, by a wave of the golden sceptre of the great Dumas!

We now come to *The Count of Monte Christo*, published in eighteen octavo volumes. The first part of this popular work was written by a M. Fiorentino, the second part by M. Maquet; yet neither is

perfectly original. The story of Morel is taken from a novel by Arnould, entitled *La Roue de la Fortune*; and two of the horrible tragedies in the second part are merely copied from the published archives of the Parisian police. Some French critics assert, on apparently very sufficient evidence, that the leading plot of *Monte Christo*, the imprisonment and escape of Dantes, his accidentally becoming possessed of immense wealth, and unscrupulously using it to wreak a terrible vengeance on his persecutors, may be found in an old and obscure German romance. However this may be, whether conquered at first or second hand, *Monte Christo* was not written by Dumas.

It must not be supposed that M. Dumas confined his conquests to romances alone. In 1839, he published a translation of Ugo Foscolo's *Jacopo Ortis*. This work requires a word or two for itself, as it has never been translated into English—an honour, by the way, of which it is utterly undeserving. *Ortis*, a poor copy of a bad model, is merely an Italian Werter, who, mingling a passionate love for a Venetian lady with an ardent zeal for the liberties of his native land, is so bewildered by the twofold emotions of love and patriotism that he takes refuge in suicide. This work was strictly proscribed by the First Napoleon; but, in spite of severe penalties, and the strenuous exertions of the police, four inferior translations of it were from time to time circulated among the ultra-republican party in France. In 1829, however, when all the political interest of the letters had evaporated, an excellent translation of *Ortis* was made by M. Gosselin, and openly published at Paris. Ten years later, the translation of Dumas appeared in rather a curious form, for there was nothing on the title-page to indicate that the work was a translation; nor was the name of the author, Foscolo, mentioned, the title-page being simply *Jacques Ortis, par Alexandre Dumas*. This simplicity of title is explained in the preface, written, or at least signed, by M. Fiorentino, who asserts that 'only one man in France could understand and translate *Ortis*.' Of course, that man is Dumas, 'who,' to quote the preface again, 'has placed himself on a level with Foscolo; and, in all justice, *Ortis* belongs to Dumas; it is at once his conquest and his heritage.' Now, this outrageous puff, though undesignedly so, is actually the bitterest of irony; for this conquest and heritage, by the only man in France capable of translating and understanding the original, is stolen, almost word for word, from the translation by Gosselin. The theft has been fully exposed by M. Querard in his *Supercheries Littéraires*, by placing parts of Gosselin's translation side by side with the same portions from Dumas.

It would be unfair if we did not admit that some of the romances, actually written by M. Dumas, possess, like his dramas, a certain degree of merit. His sketches are vivid, but more remarkable for effect than probability, and his combinations ever display more taste than originality of conception. He groups artistically, but allows coarse contrasts of light and shade; while all through his writings can be observed a greater hastiness of execution than accuracy of detail. Any work bearing his name that exhibits evidence of research, investigation, or reflection, may be safely set down as not written by him. One would suppose such a writer unfitted to shine as a historian; but his friends assert that in that respect he is fully equal to Chateaubriand and Thierry; and, curiously enough, his assailants are forced to concur in the same opinion. This seeming anomaly can easily be explained. In *Gaule et France*, written by Dumas, there are just 400 pages taken wholesale from the *Etudes Historiques* of Chateaubriand, and the *Lettres sur l'Histoire de France* of Thierry! It is to be hoped that M. Dumas is not so ungrateful as Donatus, the saintly plagiarist of yore, who used to exclaim: 'Let them be excommunicated

and accursed who have written our good things before us!

A detailed notice of the numerous works written and otherwise manufactured by and for M. Dumas, would require a volume. No field of literature did he leave untilled; and truly his harvests were abundant. Lawsuits that would have ruined any other man, served merely as advertisements to keep this Barnum of literature before the public. One of these lawsuits, being rather characteristic of French ideas, is worthy of more particular notice. In *La Dame de Monsoreau*, one of the Dumas romances, really written by himself, he depicted François d'Espinau, a courtier in the reign of Henry III., in no flattering colours; and the Marquis d'Espinau, a descendant of the above-named François, actually, in the nineteenth century, brought an action against the romancier for defaming the character of an ancestor who lived in the sixteenth! Fortunately for Dumas, his view of the courtier's character was supported by history, and, consequently, he gained the suit. The Château of Monte Christo, of which an account lately appeared in this Journal, was another advertisement—a gigantic puff direct; so were the lion-killing feats in Algeria, the visit to the brigands of the Sierra Morena, and the host of other wonderful adventures so unlike any that other persons had ever met with, and in all of which every person and circumstance combined for the one purpose only of glorifying and doing honour to the immortal genius of Dumas. All this prolonged *fanfare* of egotistical braggadocio has, by those who were before the curtain, been ascribed to inordinate vanity; while those behind the scenes knew it to be merely an exercise of what an old book terms the pleasant art of money-catching. Is Professor Drugaway vain of his pills, think ye? We opine not. He puffs them, and they pay him well for the puffing. So did the books issued by M. Dumas. Their sale was immense, their number was legion, and their prices were high. To purchase a complete set of his works would, in 1848, have required upwards of £68 sterling!

For a long period, squib, satire, and criticism fell harmless against the brazen walls of the great temple of literary humbug erected by M. Dumas. Nothing less than a revolution could overthrow it, and at last a revolution did. M. Dumas no longer resides in the Château of Monte Christo, but, as the Napoleon of literature, it is said he terms his present Belgian residence St Helena!

Space has permitted us to notice only a few of the more striking points of this remarkable chapter in the history of literary deception. As our authorities, and a clue to those who may wish to learn more, we refer the reader to the work of M. Querard, already quoted—to the *Fabrique de Romans*, *Maison A. Dumas et Compagnie*, of Eugène de Mirecourt; and to *Alexandre Dumas Dévoilé*, said to be written by M. Chassagnac.

MISTAKES ABOUT SNAKES.

It is wonderful how many popular delusions exist about snakes, what marvellous stories are told of them, and how readily they find believers.

It is generally supposed that they have such a taste for music as to leave their hiding-places at the sound of the snake-charmer's uncouth instrument; that they like a warm berth, and are in the habit of ensconcing themselves under a pillow or part of a lady's dress; that they are partial to milk, a small portion of which placed near is sufficient to allure them from the most desirable resting-place; and that there is some herb an infallible remedy for their bite, only known to their inveterate enemy, the mongoose, who cures himself with it when wounded in one of those encounters which occur so frequently between them. The fallacy of this last has been satisfactorily proved by trying the

experiment of shutting up a mongoose and a poisonous snake in the same room. After some delay, the mongoose killed the snake, and appeared none the worse for it. Now, as it is improbable that the animal kept any of the concentrated essence of this wonderful herb about him, and as he certainly could not go abroad to seek it, we can only conclude that he possessed dexterity enough to avoid the bite of his antagonist, and thus came off scathless and victorious.

As to their fondness for quartering themselves in warm localities, it is only in an uncongenial climate that they nestle in blankets or betake themselves to other such unwonted luxuries. In their own country, they prefer a tuft of moist grass or a ruined building. When they pay you a domestic visit, they seem to like the bathing-room with its cool jars, better than any other part of the house, and are fond of lounging behind any door which is rarely opened, or in a box placed near the wall; or, in fact, in any place that is quiet, cool, and dark. The statement that music is relished by the snake-tribe has obtained general belief; yet I feel convinced that it is greatly exaggerated, if not wholly untrue. As to the snake-charmers capturing them by means of music—if such a term can be applied to the abominably discordant sounds they produce—with equal truth might it be said that Mr Anderson's magic-wand produces the startling effects we witness in his exhibitions, or that 'hocus pocus' or 'hey presto' possess miraculous powers when uttered by certain individuals. The whole thing is a delusion.

The snake-charmers of India are a very low caste, who lead a vagabond life, and eat whatever they can obtain with least trouble, totally disregarding conventional prejudices on the subject. Rats and jackals are considered dainties; and an animal having died from disease, instead of unfitting it for food, only gives it additional piquancy in their eyes. I never saw them engaged in any industrial employment except making ropes, which, besides juggling and snake-charming, forms their ostensible means of livelihood. They are not averse, however, to increase their private resources by thieving, or any other roguery when opportunity offers. Their women are strapping Amazons, with high voices and low morals. On one occasion, marching in command of a small detachment, I found, on arriving at the only encamping-ground for some miles, that it was occupied by a party of these people. I sent for the head man, and was surprised at a woman making her appearance instead. Knowing their thievish propensities, I politely told the lady the ground was only large enough for one camp; whereon she coolly observed, that if such was the case, I had better move on and leave them the place to themselves. I gave a categorical rejoinder—first, that the ground had been cleared by the *sircar* (government) for their own troops; secondly, that I had orders to halt there that day, and meant to obey them; and thirdly and lastly, that if they did not clear out bag and baggage *instantly*, I would save them the trouble, and deposit their traps in the adjacent nullah. The fair charmer retired; but, while doing so, she hurled at me her Parthian arrows in the form of evil wishes and abusive epithets. The virago never once paused for breath, or hesitated for a word, but poured forth an uninterrupted volley of slang, compared with which the choicest Billingsgate would seem a complimentary address. Seeing that resistance was useless, however, she called the other women; they caught and accoutred their half-starved, vicious-looking *tattoos*, struck tents, packed up everything, and then mounted their steeds *en cavalier*. During this scene, the men sat and smoked, seeming to regard their proceedings as a matter of course, and rendering no assistance whatever. As soon as the party were in marching-order, the pipes were transferred to the fair equestrians, and the men trudged on, leaving them to follow at leisure,

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which they did—alternately smoking and scolding, until the jungle hid them from us.

The men alone practise the snake-charming trick, and are generally tall, loose-limbed, hard-featured fellows, dressed in coarse salmon-coloured garments. They go about cantonments playing on their singularly unmusical instrument, which emits a sound something like what boys make out of oat stems, called a jokawn in Ireland, only twice as harsh, and ten times as loud. I was sitting one morning in the veranda of a friend's bungalow, when one of those men, attended by a boy, came up, and after making salam, requested permission to try his skill in discovering snakes in the compound. My friend told him that he had been several months residing there, and had never seen one; however, at the earnest request of some ladies lately arrived from England, the man was told to try if he could find any. Making another salam, he started off, and began playing and strolling about the compound, stopping occasionally as if to look about him. After a short time he returned, saying he felt sure a snake was in or near the sheep-house. This was exactly in the opposite direction from the spot from which he had set out, and thither we all went in a body. The house was quite empty, all the sheep being out grazing, and we followed the snake-charmer in, who moved about inside as if uncertain which way to turn. He then ceased playing, and addressed the snake-tribe, calling them his father and mother, the light of his life, the patrons of his caste; that he would never hurt them, or let any one else do so; he would only keep them three days, feed them well, and then release them far away in the jungle. This farce continued for a while, when he stopped opposite a small hole in the mud-wall about the size of a shilling, in which he inserted his finger, and pulling out a piece of the mud, disclosed a snake about two feet long coiled up inside. This he took out and handled, tied it round his neck, and let it bite his hand, pretending it gave him great pain.

The man produced a blue bag, into which the snake glided as if accustomed to it. This, and there being no marks of bites on the man's hands, confirmed me in the belief that the snake was a tame one, and I told him so; which he denied indignantly, saying it was very poisonous, and begged for a small present and his dismissal.

This we refused, saying we would first test his truth by letting the snake bite a fowl; and if it died in a short time, he should get what he asked; otherwise, we would kill the snake, and thrust him out as an impostor. In vain he protested—we were inexorable: the fowl was brought, and we told him to proceed; when, finding there was no other resource, he made a clean breast of it, confessed that the snake was a tame one with the fangs extracted, and that it had been placed in the sheep-house by his boy whilst he was pretending to look in another direction; and finally begged us not to deprive a poor man of the means of earning his bread, by destroying the snake. As we had obtained what we wanted—namely, satisfied ourselves on the subject, we dismissed him with a handful of pice, noway abashed at the detection of his imposture.

The different varieties of snakes are almost innumerable. In our Hindustanee dictionary, I find forty-five different words signifying serpent or snake, and of course many must be omitted in a work of the kind, from which some idea may be formed of the great number of different species that exist. Of these, the greater number are altogether innocuous; others, slightly poisonous—that is to say, their bite would be attended with some pain and inflammation, but not fatal consequences, except to the smaller class of animals. Comparatively few species are deadly,

of which the most common are the cobra da capello and the karait; the latter is beautifully marked with black and brown spots, and seldom exceeds twenty inches or two feet in length; but its small size only adds to the danger, by rendering it so difficult to be seen. Some people assert that no bite would prove fatal if the proper remedies were applied immediately.

The most successful treatment seems to be sucking and cleansing the wound at once, administering repeated doses of *eau de luce*, or if that is not at hand, brandy or other stimulants; also keeping the patient in constant exercise, and preventing his giving way to the drowsiness which always comes on as soon as the virus has had time to circulate in the system. The natives have many remedies, some of which appear very absurd; but they answer the required purpose, as very few deaths occur amongst them from this cause. The most popular cure is the 'zuhur mohra,' or poison antidote.

It is a small stone, resembling in size and appearance that infantine luxury called a 'bull's-eye' after it has been held for some time in the hand of a dirty child. It is stated to be found in the stomach of a toad, and brought from the neighbourhood of Bokhara. Perhaps, had Shakespeare ever heard an inkling of this, he would have made a change in his simile for adversity, and placed the 'precious jewel,' which 'the toad, ugly and venomous, wears,' in another part of his body.

I saw the zuhur mohra tried once by a bheestee, who was bitten in the great toe. The stone was merely moistened in water, and bound on the foot, a little above the wound, by a strip of linen. I laughed at the remedy, and offered the man *eau de luce*, which he refused. Next day, however, he was as well as ever; so we must conclude that either the snake was not poisonous, or that there is more in the antidote than one would suppose. On another occasion, I saw my gardener bitten in the heel by a scorpion; the pain was so intense that the man dropped as if shot. The only remedy he used was forming a circle round the instep with butter-milk and chunam, and getting a Brahmin to bless it. This occurred in the evening, about sunset; and next morning, at gun-fire, the man was working in the garden, none the worse for the sting. Had a European received the same injury, and treated it *secundum artem*, he would probably have been laid up for a week.

The Hindoos relate countless anecdotes and traditions of snakes. One species, called the dhamin, which is nearly black, and grows to eight or nine feet long, is said to be poisonous only on a Sunday. Another kind is supposed to attack none but women: probably its antecedent in the metempsychosis was a disappointed lover, who thus revenges himself on the sex.—*N.B.* Both kinds are perfectly harmless. Vishnu, the second person of the Hindoo Trinity, is said to repose on an enormous serpent, the fortunate possessor of a thousand heads, one of which supports the world. One holiday is set apart for the worship of serpents, an immense number of which inhabit the regions under the earth in company with some congenial souls in the shape of hydras and dragons. The sun never shines there, but it is lit up with innumerable precious stones of great value and brilliancy.

That marvellous stories of these reptiles are not confined to natives alone, the following anecdote will testify, which was narrated by a gallant and veracious field-officer, known in the far East by the sobriquet of Colonel Liebig:—

'I was walking in my veranda one evening when I observed a snake gliding along the walk and making for his hole in the opposite bank. I looked about for a switch or whip, but nothing of the kind was within reach. A moment more, and he would have escaped, when, actuated by a sudden impulse, I seized him by the tail just as he was entering his hole, and threw him back several yards, shouting to the servants to

bring a stick to despatch him. They were deaf or stupid; not a soul appeared to hear me. The snake picked himself up, and began wriggling back towards his domicile. Growing excited, I seized a couple of stones, and pelted them at him; both shots told, for one went through the window, and another killed a pet bantam. Again he approached the hole, and again I jerked him back as before. The confounded servants either could not or would not hear me; and as he drew near his hole for the third time, I prepared to repeat my former experiment, but the rascal had grown too knowing for me this time; he deliberately turned round and entered the hole tail-foremost—not only this, but he had the impudence to stick out his tongue at me just before his head disappeared!

Our readers will perceive by this true story that the serpent has lost none of the subtlety he possessed in olden times; they may, however, rely upon it, that if they ever meet one, he will be quite as anxious to part company as themselves. There may be fear, but there can be no danger unless you tread on the reptile, or otherwise injure it. The best way to destroy it is to get quietly alongside, and give it a smart tap on the back with a riding-whip or pliant switch—a very slight blow will dislocate the vertebra, and then the enemy is at your mercy. Many, however, escape, owing to the objection all high-caste Hindoos have to killing them; particularly if they have bitten any one, as they consider that killing the snake in that case signs the death-warrant of the person bitten. To such an extent does this prejudice go, that I once saw a petition sent into the magistrate's court by a Hindoo widow, who accused a certain Mussulman trooper of having caused the death of her husband, by killing a snake immediately after it had bitten the deceased. It is needless to say that the magistrate's verdict was: 'Served him right.'

That the snake may be lured from his hole by placing a vessel of milk near the spot, cannot be true; as, when living in a country where these reptiles abounded, I never found one near where milk was usually kept; and even had it been otherwise, I would have acquitted him of thievish intentions, as the truth is, the ophidia never drink.

I have thus endeavoured to confute some of the false stories commonly told and believed about the genus *Coluber*, who are, I consider, in many respects a much vilified and misrepresented race. In olden times they were better known and appreciated, when the serpent was the companion of Esculapius and the emblem of convalescence.

THE PAINTER AND HIS PUPIL.

A FLEMISH STORY.

My father was a trader and distiller at Schiedam, on the Maas. Without being wealthy, we enjoyed the means of procuring every social comfort. We gave and received visits from a few old friends; we went occasionally to the theatre; and my father had his tulip-garden and summer-house at a little distance from Schiedam, on the banks of the canal which connects the town with the river.

But my father and mother, whose only child I was, cherished one dream of ambition, in which, fortunately, my own tastes led me to participate: they wanted me to become a painter. 'Let me but see a picture by Franz Linden in the gallery at Rotterdam,' said my father, 'and I shall die happy.' So, at fourteen years of age, I was removed from school, and placed in the classes of Messer Keeler, an artist living at Delft. Here I made such progress, that by the time I had reached my nineteenth birthday, I was transferred to the atelier of Hans van Roos, a descendant of the celebrated family of that name. Van Roos was not

more than thirty-eight or forty, and had already acquired a considerable reputation as a painter of portraits and sacred subjects. There was an altar-piece of his in one of our finest churches; his works had occupied the place of honour for the last six years at the annual exhibition; and for portraiture he numbered among his patrons most of the wealthy merchants and burgomasters of the city. Indeed, there could be no question that my master was rapidly acquiring a fortune equal to his popularity.

Still, he was not a cheerful man. It was whispered by the pupils that he had met with a disappointment early in life—that he had loved, was accepted, and, on the eve of marriage, was rejected by the lady for a more wealthy suitor. The story, however, was founded merely on conjecture, if not originating in pure fable; for no one in Rotterdam knew the history of his youth. He came from Friesland, in the north of Holland, when a very young man; he had always been the same gloomy, pallid, labour-loving citizen. He was a rigid Calvinist; he was sparing of domestic expenditure, and liberal to the poor: this every one could tell you, and no one knew more.

The number of his pupils was limited to six. He kept us continually at work, and scarcely permitted us to exchange a word with each other during the day. Standing there among us so silently, with the light from above shining down upon his pallid face, and, contrasting with the sombre folds of his long black dressing-gown, he looked almost like some stern old picture himself. To tell the truth, we were all afraid of him; not that he was harsh, not that he assumed any overbearing authority: on the contrary, he was stately, silent, and frigidly polite; and that was far more impressive. None of us resided in his house, for he lived in the deepest seclusion. I had a second floor in a neighbouring street, and two of my fellow-students occupied rooms in the same house. We used to meet at night in each other's chambers, and make excursions to the exhibitions and theatres; and sometimes, on a summer's evening, we would hire a pleasure-boat, and row for a mile or two down the river. We were merry enough then, and not quite so silent, I promise you, as in the gloomy studio of Hans van Roos.

In the meantime, I was ambitious and anxious to glean every benefit from my master's instructions. I improved rapidly, and my paintings soon excelled those of the other five. My taste did not incline to sacred subjects, like that of Van Roos, but rather to the familiar rural style of Berghem and Paul Potter. It was my great delight to wander along the rich pasture-lands, to watch the amber sunset, the herds going home to the dairy, the lazy wind-mills, and the calm clear waters of the canals, scarcely ruffled by the passage of the public *treckschuyt*.* In depicting scenes of this nature—

The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail—

I was singularly fortunate. My master never praised me by word or look; but when my father came up one day from Schiedam to visit me, he drew him aside and told him, in a voice inaudible to the rest, that 'Messer Franz would be a credit to the profession;' which so delighted the good distiller, that he straightway took me out with him for the day, and, after giving me fifteen gold pieces as a testimony of his satisfaction, took me to dine with his friend the burgomaster, Von Gael. It was an eventful visit for me. On that evening I first learned to love.

Few people, I think, would at that time have denied the personal attractions of Gertrude von Gael; yet I do not know that it was so much her features as her soft voice and gentle womanly grace that so completely

* Canal-boat.

fascinated me. Though so young, she performed the honours of her father's princely table with self-possession and good-breeding. In the evening, she sang some sweet German songs to her own simple accompaniment. We talked of books and of poetry: I found her well read in English, French, and German literature. We spoke of art; and she discovered both judgment and enthusiasm.

As we took our leave at night, the burgomaster shook me warmly by the hand, and told me to come often. I fancied that Gertrude's blue eyes brightened when he said it, and I felt the colour rush quickly to my brow as I bowed and thanked him.

'Franz,' said my father, when we were once more in the street, 'how old are you?'

'Just twenty-two, sir,' I replied, rather surprised at the question.

'You will not be dependent on your brush, my boy,' continued my father, as he leaned upon my arm and looked back at the lofty mansion we had just left. 'I have been neither wasteful nor unsuccessful, and it will be my pride to leave you a respectable income at my death.'

I inclined my head in silence, and wondered what would come next.

'Burgomeister von Gael is one of my oldest friends,' said my father.

'I have often heard you speak of him, sir,' I replied.

'And he is rich.'

'So I should suppose.'

'Gertrude will have a fine fortune,' said my father, as if thinking aloud.

I bowed again, but this time rather nervously.

'Marry her, Franz.'

I dropped his arm and started back.

'Sir!' I faltered: 'I—I—marry the Fraulein von Gael!'

'And pray, sir, why not?' said my father curtly, stopping short in his walk and leaning both hands upon the top of his walking-stick.

I made no reply.

'Why not, sir?' repeated my father very energetically. 'What could you wish for better? The young lady is handsome, good-tempered, educated, rich. Now, Franz, if I thought you had been such a fool as to form any other attachment without'—

'Oh, sir, you do me injustice!' I cried. 'Indeed, I know no one—have seen no other lady. But—do you think that—that she would have me, sir?'

'Try her, Franz,' said my father good-humouredly, as he resumed my arm. 'If I am not very much mistaken, the burgomeister would be as pleased as myself; and as for the fraulein—women are easily won.'

We had by this time reached the door of the inn where my father was to sleep for the night. As he left me, his last words were: 'Try her, Franz—try her.'

From this time I became a frequent visitor at the house of the Burgomaster von Gael. It was a large old-fashioned mansion, built of red brick, and situated upon the famous line of houses known as the Boomjes. In front lay the broad shining river, crowded with merchant-vessels, from whose masts fluttered the flags of all the trading nations of the world. Tall trees, thick with foliage, lined the quays, and cast a pleasant shade, through which the sunlight flickered brightly upon the spacious drawing-rooms of Gertrude's home.

Here, night after night, when the studies of the day were past, I used to sit with her beside the open window, and watch the busy passing crowd beneath, the rippling river, and the rising moon that tipped the masts and city spires with silver. Here, listening to the accents of a distant ballad-singer, or to the far murmur of voices from the shipping, we read together from the pages of our favourite poets, and counted the first pale stars that trembled into light.

It was a happy time. But there came at last a time

still happier, when, one still evening as we sat alone, conversing in unfrequent whispers, and listening to the beating of each other's hearts, I told Gertrude that I loved her; and she, in answer, laid her fair head silently upon my shoulder with a sweet confidence, as she were content so to rest for ever. Just as my father had predicted, the burgomaster shewed every mark of satisfaction, and readily sanctioned our betrothal, specifying but one condition, and this was that our marriage should not take place till I had attained my twenty-fifth year. It was a long time to wait; but I should by that time, perhaps, have made a name in my profession. I intended soon to send a picture to the annual exhibition—and who could tell what I might not do in three years to shew Gertrude how dearly I loved her!

And so our happy youth rolled on, and the quaint old dial in Messer von Gael's tulip-garden told the passage of our golden hours. In the meantime, I worked sedulously at my picture; I laboured upon it all the winter; and when spring-time came, I sent it in, with no small anxiety as to its probable position upon the walls of the gallery. It was a view in one of the streets of Rotterdam. There were the high old houses with their gables and carved doorways, and the red sunset glittering on the bright winking panes of the upper windows—the canal flowing down the centre of the street, crossed by its white drawbridge, with a barge just passing underneath—the green trees spreading a long evening shadow across the yellow paving of the roadway, and the spire of the Church of St Lawrence rising high beyond, against the clear warm sky. When it was quite finished, and about to be sent away, even Hans van Roos nodded a cold encouragement, and said that it deserved a good position. He had himself prepared a painting this year, on a more ambitious scale and a larger canvas than usual. It was a sacred subject, and represented the Conversion of St Paul. His pupils admired it warmly, and none more than myself. We all pronounced it to be his master-piece, and the artist was evidently of our opinion.

The day of exhibition came at last. I had scarcely slept the previous night; and the early morning found me, with a number of other students, waiting impatiently before the yet unopened door. When I arrived, it wanted an hour to the time, but half the day seemed to elapse before we heard the heavy bolts give way inside, and then forced our way struggling through the narrow barriers. I had down up the staircase, and found myself in the first room, amid the bright walls of paintings and gilt frames. I had forgotten to purchase a catalogue at the entrance, and I had not patience to go back for it; so I strode round and round the apartment, looking eagerly for my picture: it was nowhere to be seen, so I passed on to the next; here my search was equally unsuccessful.

'It must be in the third room,' I said to myself, 'where all the best works are placed! Well, if it be hung ever so high, or in ever so dark a corner, it is, at all events, an honour to have one's picture in the third room!'

But, though I spoke so bravely, it was with a sinking heart I ventured in. I could not really hope for a good place among the magnates of the art; while in either of the other rooms there had been a possibility that my picture might receive a tolerable situation.

The house had formerly been the mansion of a merchant of enormous wealth, who had left it, with his valuable collection of paintings, for the purpose of affording encouragement to Flemish art. The third room had been his reception-chamber, and the space over the magnificently carved chimney was assigned, as the place of honour, to the best painting. The painter of this picture always received a costly prize, for which he was likewise indebted to the munificence

of the founder. To this spot, my eyes were naturally turned as I entered the door. Was I dreaming? I stood still—I turned hot and cold by turns—I ran forward. It was no delusion! There was my picture, my own picture, in its little modest frame, installed in the chief place of all the gallery! And there, too, was the official card stuck in the corner, with the words, 'PRIZE PAINTING,' printed in shining gold letters in the middle! I ran down the staircase and bought a catalogue, that my eyes might be gladdened by the confirmation of this joy; and there, sure enough, was printed at the commencement: 'ANNUAL PRIZE PAINTING—View in Rotterdam, No. 127—FRANZ LINDEN.' I could have wept for delight. I was never tired of looking at my picture: I walked from one side to the other—I retreated—I advanced closer to it—I looked at it in every possible light, and forgot all but my happiness.

'A very charming little painting, sir,' said a voice at my elbow.

It was an elderly gentleman, with gold spectacles and an umbrella. I coloured up, and said falteringly: 'Do you think so?'

'I do, sir,' said the old gentleman. 'I am an amateur—I am very fond of pictures. I presume that you are also an admirer of art?'

I bowed.

'Very nice little painting indeed; ve—ry nice,' he continued, as he wiped his glasses, and adjusted them with the air of a connoisseur. 'Water very liquid, colours pure, sky transparent, perspective admirable. I'll buy it.'

'Will you?' I exclaimed joyfully. 'Oh, thank you, sir!'

'Oh,' said the old gentleman, turning suddenly upon me and smiling kindly, 'so you are the artist, are you? Happy to make your acquaintance, Messer Linden. You are a very young man to paint such a picture as that. I congratulate you, sir: and—I'll buy it.'

So we exchanged cards, shook hands, and became the best friends in the world. I was burning with impatience to see Gertrude, and tell her all my good-fortune; but my new patron took my arm, and said that he must make the tour of the rooms in my company; and I was even forced to comply.

We stopped before a large painting that occupied the next best situation to mine: it was my master's work, the Conversion of St Paul. While we were admiring it, and I was telling him of my studies in the atelier of the painter, a man started from before us, and glided away, but not before I had recognised the pale countenance of Van Roos. There was something in the expression of his face that shocked me, something that stopped my breath and made me shudder. What was it? I scarcely knew; but the glare of his dark eyes and the quivering passion of his lip haunted me for the rest of the day, and came back again in my dreams. I said nothing of it to Gertrude that afternoon, but it had sobered my rapturous exultation most effectually. I positively dreaded, the next day, to return to the studio; but, to my surprise, my master received me as he never had received me before. He advanced, and extended his hand to me.

'Welcome, Franz Linden,' he said smiling; 'I am proud to call you my pupil.'

The hand was cold—the voice was harsh—the smile was passionless. My companions crowded round and congratulated me; and in the warm tones of their young, cheerful voices, and the close pressure of their friendly hands, I forgot all that had pained me in the conduct of Van Roos.

Not long after this event, Gertrude's father desired to have her portrait painted—to console him for her absence, he said, when I should be so wicked as to take her away from him. I recommended my old

master, whose tutelage I had recently left; and Van Roos was summoned to fulfil a task that I would gladly have performed; but portraiture was not my line. I could paint a sleek, spotted milch cow, or a drove of sheep, far better than the fair skin and golden curls of my darling Gertrude.

She could not endure the artist from the first. In vain I reasoned with and strove to persuade her—all was of no use; and she used to say, at the end of every such conversation, that she wished the portrait were finished, and that she could no more help disliking him than—than she could help loving me. So our arguments always ended with a kiss.

But this portrait took long time. Van Roos was in general a rapid painter; yet Gertrude's likeness progressed at a very slow pace, and, like Penelope's web, seemed never to be completed. One morning I happened to be in the room—a rare event at that time, for I was hard at work upon my new landscape; and I was struck by the change that had come over my late master. He seemed to be no longer the same man. There was a light in his eye, and a vibration in his voice, that I had never observed before; and when he rose to take leave, there was a studied courtesy in his bow and manner that took me quite by surprise.

Still, I never suspected the truth, and still the portrait was as far as ever from being finished.

It all came out at last; and one morning Hans van Roos made a formal offer of his hand and heart: of course he was immediately refused.

'But as kindly as was possible, dear Franz,' she said, when she told me in the evening; 'because he is your friend, and because he seemed to feel it so deeply. And—and you don't know how dreadfully white he turned, and how he tried to restrain his tears. I pitied him, Franz; and, indeed, I was very sorry.' And the gentle creature could scarcely keep from weeping herself as she told me.

I did not see Van Roos for some months after this disclosure; at last I met him accidentally one morning in front of the stadhouders, and, to my surprise, for the second time in his life, he held out his hand.

'A good day to you, Messer Linden,' said he. 'I hear that you are on the high road to fame and fortune.'

'I have been very prosperous, Messer van Roos,' I replied, taking the proffered hand—'more prosperous, perhaps, than my merits deserve. I never forget that I owe my present proficiency to the hours spent in your atelier.'

A peculiar expression flitted over his face.

'If I thought that,' said he hastily, 'I—I should esteem myself particularly happy.'

There was so odd a difference in the way in which he uttered the beginning and end of this sentence—so much hurry and passion in the first half, such deliberate politeness in the last, that I started and looked him full in the face: he was as smiling and impenetrable as a marble statue.

'I, too, have been fortunate,' he said, after a moment's pause. 'Have you seen the new church lately built near the east end of the Haring-vliet?'

I replied that I had observed it in passing, but had not been inside.

'I have been intrusted,' he said, 'with the superintendence of the interior decorations. My "Conversion of St Paul" is purchased for the altar-piece, and I am now engaged in painting a series of frescoes upon the ceiling. Will you come in one day and give me your opinion upon them?'

I professed myself much flattered, and appointed to visit him in the church on the following morning. He was waiting for me at the door when I arrived, with the heavy keys in his hand. We passed in, and he turned the key in the lock.

'I always secure myself against intruders,' he said smiling. 'People will come into the church if I leave

the doors unfastened; and I do not choose to carry on my art, like a sign-painter, in the presence of every blockhead who chooses to stand and stare at me.'

It was surprising in what a disagreeable manner this man shewed his teeth when he smiled.

The church was decidedly a handsome building, built in that Italian style which imitates the antique, and prefers grace and magnificence to the dignified sanctity of the Gothic order. A row of elegant Corinthian columns supported the roof at each side of the nave; gilding and decorative cornices were lavished in every direction; the gorgeous altar-piece already occupied its appointed station; and a little to the left of the railed space where the communion-table was to be placed, a lofty scaffolding was erected, that seemed, from where I stood, almost to come in contact with the roof, and above which I observed the yet unfinished sketch of a masterly fresco. Three or four more, already completed, were stationed at regular intervals, and some others were merely outlined in charcoal upon their intended site.

'Will you not come up with me?' asked the painter, when I had expressed my admiration sufficiently; 'or are you afraid of turning giddy?'

I felt somewhat disinclined to impose this trial on my nerves, but still more disinclined to confess it; so I followed him up from flight to flight of the frail structure without once daring to look down.

At last we reached the summit. As I had supposed, there was not even room enough for the artist to assume a sitting posture, and he had to paint while lying on his back. I had no fancy to extend myself on this lofty couch; so I only lifted my head above the level of his flooring, looked at the fresco, and descended immediately to the flight below, where I waited till he rejoined me.

'How dangerous it must be,' said I shuddering, 'to let yourself down from that abominable perch!'

'I used to think so at first,' he replied; 'but I am now quite accustomed to it. Fancy,' said he, approaching close to the edge of the scaffolding—'fancy falling from this into the church below!'

'Horrible!' cried I.

'I wonder how high it is from the level of the pavement,' continued Van Roos musingly; 'ninety feet, I daresay—perhaps a hundred.'

I drew back, giddy at the thought.

'No man could survive such a fall,' said the painter, still looking over. 'Any skull would be dashed to atoms on the marble down there.'

'Pray, come away,' said I hastily; 'my head swims at the very idea.'

'Does it?' said he, turning suddenly upon me with the voice and eye of a fiend—'does it? Fool!' he cried as he seized me round the body in his iron clasp—'fool, to trust yourself here with me—me whom you have wronged, whose life you have blasted!—me whom you have crossed in fame and in love! Down, wretch, down! I've vowed to have your blood, and my time has come!'

It sickens me even now to recall that desperate struggle. At the first word he uttered, I had sprung back and seized a beam above my head: he strove to tear me from it—he foamed at the mouth, the veins rose like knots upon his forehead; and still, though I felt my wrists strained and my fingers cruelly lacerated, still I held on with the terrible energy of one who struggles for dear life. It lasted a long time—at least it seemed long to me—and the scaffolding rocked beneath our feet. At length I saw his strength failing; suddenly I loosed my hold, and threw my whole weight upon him. He staggered—he shrieked—he fell!

I dropped upon my face in mute horror—an age of silence seemed to elapse, and the cold dews stood upon my brow. Presently I heard a dull sound far below. I crawled to the brink of the scaffolding, and looked

over—a shapeless mass was lying on the marble pavement, and all around was red with blood.

I think an hour must have elapsed before I could summon courage to descend. When at length I reached the level ground, I turned my face from what was so near my feet, and tottered to the door. With trembling hands and misty eyes, I unlocked it, and rushed into the street. Once outside, I fell to the ground. I remember no more, for I had fainted.

It was many months before I recovered from the brain fever brought on by that terrible day; indeed, I think I never should have lived through it, but for the tender cares of my betrothed, who watched me day and night, till the physicians pronounced me out of danger. My ravings, they told me, had been fearful; and had any doubts existed in the minds of men as to which of us two had been the guilty one, those ravings were alone sufficient to establish my innocence. A man in a delirious fever is pretty sure to speak the truth. By the time I was able to leave my chamber, Gertrude also had grown pale and spiritless, and all unlike her former self. Rotterdam was insupportable to me; and I found myself a hero of romance, a lion, a thing to be stared after wherever I went, which only served to shatter my nerves more than ever. In short, change of air and scene was recommended for us both; so we thought we could not do better than marry, and take our wedding tour for the sake of our health. And I assure you, reader, it did us both a great deal of good.

TESTIMONIALS TO CHARACTER.

In our juvenile days, when roaming through the world of London in quest of lodgings, it happened to us to make acquaintance with a very rough but very honest landlady. Her accommodation suited both our requirements and our finances, and the next question we thought must be as to 'references.' To this subject we turned with some anxiety, for we were a new arrival in the said world, and had not as yet even delivered our letters of introduction: so it was not without a little awkwardness we forced ourselves to take the initiative by asking desperately whether she desired to be referred to those who knew us, or—

'Tush! nonsense, mister!' interrupted the landlady. 'References, indeed!—and what's the good of them, pray? If your present landlady doesn't like your goings on, she'll give you the best of characters to get you out; and the merest acquaintance you made yesterday will not refuse to call you a perfect hangel, if you ask him, since the good-nature will cost nothing. No, no, mister, I'm for no characters, thank you all the same—I have had quite enough of them!' We thought at the time that the good woman was a little eccentric in her abhorrence of references; but as years passed on, and our experience multiplied, we must confess we came gradually round to a full share in the feeling.

Whether a false character is the result of intentional roguery or amiable weakness, the result is the same: in fact, the mischief is more serious in the latter case, for the employer is not on his guard against goodness and respectability. He does not suspect that this excellent person on whose opinion he relies is merely a selfish man, who, rather than give himself the pain of wounding the feelings or injuring the prospects of an applicant for employment, makes no scruple of compromising the interest of the third party, who throws himself upon his honour. This, notwithstanding, is the real state of the case. The character-giver thinks of only one of the two persons concerned: he does his best to patronise the situation-hunter, and this is, in many cases, equivalent to deceiving the future employer. Not that he

frequently does this in direct words, for he knows that a little omission or a little over-colouring will answer the same purpose without very much compromising himself. When a 'respectable' family is about to part with a domestic servant, the question is, how to do so without destroying the poor girl, who may, in all probability, behave better, or prove more useful, in her next place? They cannot speak falsely of her—that is out of the question; but they may be good-natured when the good qualities are mentioned, of which she really has some small portion; and they do hope that the faulty part of her character will not be inquired into, for then they may be silent with a good conscience, since it is certainly not their business to prompt disagreeable questions! This, it must be confessed, is an odd way of being amiable: the family does not choose to keep the delinquent or the incapable in its own service, but it does everything that is consistent with 'respectability' to inflict her upon somebody else. Here we have an example of what must be called, if we would speak honestly, the unprincipled indulgence of selfish feeling.

The remedy for this kind of misconduct on the part of the respectables is only to be looked for in the gradual advance of a higher principle of general morality; but in the meantime it seems to be a decided tendency of the age to throw discredit upon private character-testimonials, and to put the candidate for employment to the actual proof of his capabilities before judges who must be supposed to be uninfluenced by private feelings, whether amiable or otherwise. This, of course, applies only to attainments in knowledge of the requisite kind, leaving untouched the equally important question of conduct and habits; but still it must be considered a great point gained, if only as a protection to the intelligent and studious, who depend upon themselves, against the ignorant and idle, who have hitherto depended upon friends and patrons.

The Society of Arts, which is every day becoming a greater and more useful body, shares in the tendency we have mentioned, and is perhaps destined to direct it. The numerous institutions throughout the country connected with the Society give it great power over the whole industrial body, and it is pleasing to find it exercising this power in a way so unquestionably advantageous to the community. Its plan is to institute a system of Examinations of candidates for commercial, manufacturing, and other employment, and to substitute official Certificates for the ordinary private testimonials of character. The Society was not at first successful, 'the idea of such a system being novel, and its advantages not immediately apparent.' Meanwhile, however, 'the political exigencies of the country importunately called for the adoption of that very system which the Council of the Society of Arts had vainly attempted to introduce among its associated Institutions.' This sentence occurs in a circular recently distributed, which goes on to describe the plan as follows:

'Success in competitive examination has very recently become the sole passport to employment in the civil service of the East India Company. Success in examination is also a necessary preliminary to admission into the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, into the Admiralty, into the War Department, into the Privy Council Office, and into the government departments generally. Examination has been revived in the Inns of Court, and it is in contemplation to incorporate them into a legal university. Now, that minute and systematic examination into the natural ability and acquired attainments of candidates for employment in their services which the crown and the East India Company are enabled efficiently to secure, the Council of the Society of Arts would desire to effect for the manufacturing and commercial interests of the country. It is obvious that the valuable

employments connected with these bodies will always secure a large supply of well-instructed candidates. Though the Society of Arts cannot hold out equal inducements, yet there can be little doubt, that were the extensive commercial establishments of this country, the great employers of labour, the railway-companies, the large manufacturers, and the friends of education, to agree to recognise the results of the examinations conducted under the sanction of the Society of Arts, and set forth in certificates awarded with discretion and integrity, a great boon would be held out to the unfriended talent of the country. The Society of Arts' certificate would thus be accepted, instead of the vague and worthless testimonials so frequently and so heedlessly given.'

According to the Society's plan, the examinations are to be conducted by men of distinguished reputation and high attainments; and, indeed, we see in the list of the board of examiners a galaxy of names that could not be easily rivalled in their various departments. These departments are: the elements of mathematics—including arithmetic—mechanics, physiology, botany, agriculture, chemistry, political and physical geography, English history, English composition and literature, free hand-drawing, the Latin, French, and German languages; in two of which subjects, at least, the candidate shall be examined.

The examinations are to be held at the Society's house in the Adelphi, London, during the week commencing the 9th of June next; and already the following Declaration is signed by about three hundred and seventy of the greatest commercial, manufacturing, and other houses in the kingdom:

'We, the undersigned, having considered the Memorandum of the Council of the Society of Arts, and the plan therein set forth, for examining and granting certificates to the students of classes for adult instruction in the Literary and Scientific Institutions, Mechanics' Institutes, Athenæums, and other similar bodies in union with the said society, do hereby declare that we desire to promote the success of the said plan, and are prepared to regard as testimonials worthy of credit such CERTIFICATES as may be awarded in conformity thereto.'

CURIOSITIES OF OUR POST-OFFICE.

Our post-office, in common with many other peaceful institutions, has been grievously disturbed and thrown off its equilibrium by the war. Ours is an Irish seaside village, and every man and boy of the operative classes dwelling therein, between the ages of twelve and sixty, was seized with an uncontrollable longing to join the fleet and fight the *Roosians*. The consequence is, that the culture of our pretty little gardens is left in the hands of an aged sea-monster, a sort of superannuated Caliban, who, having turned his ear into a spade, has suddenly started up as a professor of horticulture. His ideas, however, savouring much more of his former than of his present profession, he calls violets *pilots*, and digs away at our luckless parterres as if he were literally ploughing the deep. If the wretch would only learn 'to do his spiring gently,' it would be something; but as matters stand, we woebegone Mirandas are left to weep over lacerated hyacinths and uprooted geraniums, while our gardener coolly assures us, that 'tis well for us to get him, for there isn't a handier boy than himself in the whole place.'

He is certainly useful in banishing insects from rose-trees; for only give him an unlimited supply of tobacco, and pay him good wages, and he will sit beneath your bower of roses, and smoke all day long with a

laudable perseverance and tranquil repose worthy of one of our Turkish allies.

To return to our post-office. One day lately, a sailor, belonging to a man-of-war lying in the harbour, stepped in, and addressing our postmaster, asked:

'Do you know Bill Jenkins A.B. of the *Racer*?'

'Not I. Why do you ask?'

'Because I wanted to give you a letter to him,' rejoined the sailor, producing an oddly folded epistle.

'Very well,' said our functionary; 'the letter will be sent to him; but you must put a stamp on it.'

'How the —,' responded the astonished seaman, 'can you send a letter to Bill Jenkins unless you know him?'

'Oh, no matter; I can send the letter; but it will cost you a penny for a stamp.'

'Stamp!' cried the sailor—'shew me one.'

A stamp was accordingly shewn to him. The honest tar turned it round contemptuously between his finger and thumb, shook his head, and exclaimed:

'No! shiver me if I put Bill Jenkins off with a penny, for he has often spent a crown upon me. Havn't you got anything handsomer than this?'

A twopenny-stamp was shewn him.

'Well, this looks decenter; but havn't you got anything better?'

The postmaster produced a shilling-stamp, which Jack inspected with an expression of approval, saying: 'All right. Put five of them on the letter. I'll never send Bill Jenkins less than five shillings' worth!'

So saying, he threw down two half-crowns on the counter, took up the five shilling-stamps, and stuck them on the letter, which he then threw into the box, with expressions of satisfaction at having spent a crown's worth on his old mate, Bill Jenkins.

Owing to the before-mentioned scarcity of boys, the present Mercury who distributes our correspondence is a bright-eyed ragged urchin of ten, wholly innocent of the art of reading. Although carrying an official-looking bag, this receptacle is merely meant to give grace and dignity to his office; for if the letters were once consigned to its depths in a mingled heap, the process of abstracting any individual one required would be a very chance-medley affair indeed, considering that the majority of our servants, as well as our post-boy, might have been pre-Cadmusites for anything they know of the alphabetic mysteries. By an ingenious species of *memoria technica*, therefore, our postmistress puts the letters for our terrace into the dirty chubby right hand of her juvenile *attaché*, and those for another in his left; while my letters, belonging to a third division, come in his mouth. Many is the editorial epistle I have myself extricated from this canine species of conveyance, and, blessing the invention of envelopes, read the unscathed sheet of note-paper, while its cover bore the marks of Master Jerry Linchan's strong white young incisors.

As to the mistakes in the delivery of the letters, they are really past counting. In fact, getting our neighbours' letters every morning has come to be regarded as quite the normal state of things in our village, and receiving our own rather an exceptional occurrence, for which we are bound to be thankful, but which we are not by any means entitled to expect. A nervous gentleman amongst us was certainly rather startled one day by receiving a demand for funeral expenses from an eminent undertaker; and an aristocratic one, by inadvertently opening an epistle designed for a government contractor, beginning 'My dear Henry [his own name], pigs are looking up, &c.'

As order, however, out of chaos sprang, so good sometimes comes of all this confusion. There lives in our village, in a handsome detached house, a rich childless widow named Effingham. She was always a civil neighbour, kind to the poor, and liberal in her expenditure, yet somehow she was not very popular

amongst us. People complained that they never got to know her any better than they did the first day they paid a visit in her nicely furnished drawing-room. She lived alone; and, although perfectly polite, she never seemed to manifest any interest in what was going on around. I believe the most intellectual, pious, or high-minded individual that ever breathed, if resident in a small village, can scarcely avoid having a tendency to small-talk about her neighbours' affairs, to curiosity about their sayings and doings—in short, to occasional indulgence in harmless gossip. Mrs Effingham was therefore looked on amongst us as a sort of phenomenon, when it was found that she took no interest whatever in the incipient flirtation between our Crimean hero—of whom we are very proud, although he *did* obtain leave of absence on 'urgent private affairs'—and Miss Ellard, our acknowledged belle. Once, indeed, when a runaway match—which, however, did not take place—was spoken of as likely to be the *dénouement* of an engagement between two penniless lovers, Mrs Effingham was heard to sigh deeply and remark: 'They are bad things; the happiness of many a family has been wrecked by a runaway match;' and then another sigh and a faint flush on the still handsome cheek, followed by a chill paleness. This rare evidence of emotion could not have been caused by any personal experience; for Mrs Effingham, we all knew, was the childless widow of a rich and highly respectable merchant, whom she had married with the full approbation of every one concerned.

By degrees, however, the truth came out—an old story! Her only sister had made a most imprudent clandestine marriage with a young ensign; and Mrs Effingham, in her first access of indignation, had made a vow never to see her sister or inquire about her again. Time rolled on, and the newspapers brought Mrs Effingham, whether she would or not, intelligence of the delinquent. First appeared among the births in the army in India the arrival of a niece. The next mail brought an account of the mother's death; and a few months after came a like announcement respecting the young husband. He died of jungle-fever, when on the eve of promotion. Often, in spite of herself, did Mrs Effingham's heart turn to the little orphan, left desolate in a foreign land, and now the only surviving member of her near kindred. Yet it was only by chance she learned that a kind stranger, the childless wife of a captain in its father's regiment, had taken the little creature to her home and heart, and was bringing it up as her own.

Years passed on. The girl, if alive, must be nearly twenty; and often in the silence of night, or in the cheerful sunshine, when we were commenting on Mrs Effingham's cold, absent, indifferent manner, was the sore self-stricken heart of the gray-haired woman yearning for the sound of a kindred voice, for the touch of a kindred hand.

She made diligent inquiries; but they were fruitless: Captain Ellis and his wife were both dead; and what had become of their adopted daughter no one could tell.

It happened one morning that our postmistress was sorely puzzled by the arrival of a letter legibly directed to 'Miss Greenham.'

'Where on the face of the earth can she be stopping?' was Mrs Callaghan's despairing inquiry. 'I'm sure I know the name of every one living or visiting in the whole place, and the never a Greenham, nor anything like it, is there in it. Here, Jerry,' she continued—'take this letter, and ax everywhere for somebody to own it. You're learning to read very fast, I'll say that for you; and here's the name *Greenham* plain enough. I'll put it in the bottom of the bag, and you'll be sure to find it.'

Away trudged Jerry on his mission, and delivered our correspondence after his usual fashion, not failing

to ask at every house: 'Was there one Miss Greenham stopping there?' The reply was always in the negative, and Jerry was almost at his wits' end, when a bright thought suddenly struck him. Mrs Effingham received very few letters, and consequently seldom came into contact with our young postman. As he was now, however, passing her door, he turned into the pleasant violet-scented little garden, and, his hands being at liberty, he gave a very tolerable imitation of an official knock at the hall-door. The grave, neat parlour-maid appeared.

'Ax the mistress could I see her for a minnit,' quoth Master Jerry.

'What do you want? I can give her any message.'

'Oh, 'tis herself I must see, about something very particklar,' was the rejoinder of our pertinacious postboy.

And the damsel at length consented to summon her mistress, who came in a state of considerable wonder to learn what Master Linchan's 'particklar business' could be.

'Would your honour be after seeing if this letter is for you?' said Jerry with his best bow, handing the unfortunate epistle to the lady.

'No, my boy; certainly it is not. My name is Mrs Effingham, and this letter is quite plainly directed to Miss Greenham.'

'Oh, but, ma'am, good-luck to you, and open it, and try if 'tis for you, for my heart's broken carrying it about everywhere, and no one will take it from me.'

'But I can't open it: it is not for me.' And the lady, turning away decidedly, was entering the parlour, when Jerry exclaimed: 'Ah, thin, ma'am, who else would it be for, if it isn't for you! Sure it ends in *h, a, m, ham*—all as one as your own name. *Effingham, Greenham*—'tis mighty little differ there's between 'em, I'm thinking.'

Master Linchan's system of orthographical mutation certainly rivalled in bold originality that of any modern philologist. His rhetoric, it would seem, was not without effect; for Mrs Effingham (she afterwards said she could not account for the impulse which led her to do so) at length consented to open the letter. A strange effect the reading of the first few lines produced on her—her face grew deadly pale, her lip quivered, and hastily desiring the boy to wait, she went into the parlour and shut the door. In about a quarter of an hour, she came out, her features wearing a softened expression, and the trace of many tears. Bidding the boy tell his mistress that 'it was all right about the letter,' she gave him a bright coin, and sent him away, the happiest of postboys.

That evening the village mail-bag went out freighted with a letter directed to 'Miss Aylmer, care of Miss Greenham,' &c.

By one of those accidents which are called improbable in novels, but which do occur in real life, Mrs Effingham's niece was living in a village in the north of Ireland, which, bearing the same name as that of our southern one, frequently has its correspondence exchanged for ours. The girl, on the death of the friends who had adopted her, but who had nothing to bequeath, came over from India, and knowing no relative, save a poor and distant cousin of her father's, a Miss Greenham, residing in our northern namesake village, she naturally, in the first instance, took up her abode with her. The letter was one produced by an advertisement which the young lady had inserted in a Dublin newspaper, offering her services as a governess. A correspondence, always directed under cover to Miss Greenham, ensued between the young Anglo-Indian and a lady of high respectability who wished to engage her. This letter, the third of the

series, contained sufficient to identify Miss Aylmer as the relative for whose presence Mrs Effingham had long pined.

No governing now—no going forth into the wide bleak world. In a few days, Miss Aylmer, accompanied by her friend, made her appearance in our village. A lively, gentle girl she was, so agreeable, that very few people ever thought of asking whether she was pretty. Under her auspices, her aunt's sometime melancholy mansion became filled with gaiety, and the number of consequent tea-parties and picnics was quite wonderful for our quiet village.

'Ye see,' said Jerry, when telling me the story confidentially for at least the tenth time—'ye see, ma'am, the good of the larning; for only that I knew that *h, a, m, spells ham*, that letter would still have been going a *shaughraun*,* and that purty young lady wouldn't be to the fore, and I'd be without the fine new cloth-jacket and corderoys that the ould mistress promised me agen next Sunday.'

It is recorded of Dr Johnson, that on receiving a letter a day or two before his death, he said: 'An odd thought strikes me—we shall receive no letters in the grave.' Now, without venturing to affirm that our post-office is a means of transmitting epistles to the 'silent land,' it certainly would appear to be now and then the medium of conveying letters from the dead to the living; in proof of which assertion I will copy, *verbatim et literatim*, a missive received by a gentleman in our village:

'MR DALLICO. PARSON.

DEAR SIR I take the opportunity of writing those lines to you hoping that you would bestow some charity towards burying her as it is the last Request now and for ever and She died Thursday the 18th Inst and She have no one to bury her unless yer assistance towards it and her dependance is always on your Rev^{ce} to do it for her and it is an act of Charity besides a reward from God Amen.

I remain
your very dutiful & obedt Servt
ELLEN AHERNE dead.†

The next document I shall cite in honour of our post-office is the following Latin epistle from one of a class of men now almost extinct in Ireland. Indeed, for aught I know, this may be the production of the Last of the Hedge-schoolmasters:

'REVERENTISSEME JOHANNES MUR
Strawberunsisaula. -PHY

Per tot varios casus per tot discrimina rerum tendimus in Latium

Viginti quintus Aprilensis octo decem quinquagesima, sed roga veniam tibi quia papyrus non satus est scribere tibi quæ pecunia deast Mihi

REVERENTISSEME DOMINE

Ego sum egroto valde et fortasse alimentum deast mihi sæpe quia inopia multa est ut ego sum pauper et non habeo pecuniam potiore harum rerum vel potiore aliquidum semenienis pomarum terrestriarum quia hortum sera est enopia semene ideo spero dabis saturo parvum auxilium potiore harum rerum—
et ego sum fidus servus tuus

DANULUS CALLANAN
Hualkunsis

The next is addressed by a rural genius of another kind to two clerical gentlemen. The verses, I flatter myself, are quite as good in their way as those of the English street-balladists immortalised in our last Number; but the poet, I fear, is no honest man he should be, inasmuch, as being a bigoted Roman Catholic, it is unlikely that his praise of a Protestant church and its

* This dialogue, with a slight change in the initial syllables of one of the proper names, is given *verbatim*.

* Anglice, 'wandering about.'

† We have seen the original of the above letter.—Ed.

parsons can proceed from any motive better than the hope of filthy lucre:

‘LINES ON THE NEW CHURCH OF KINNEIGH—ADDRESSED TO THE REV. GODFREY C. SMYTH AND THE REV. FRANCIS HOPKINS.

One Morning fair mild & serene
I reached the heights of Ardkillen
I viewed the new-built Church at Kinneigh Staple
A Brilliant shield for God's own people
A lovely youth of freedom's home
Laid the first foundation stone
That Angels wings may him protect
And long may live the Architect—
An ancient structure * by it stands
Posterity say its built by Fairy hands
Majestic, tall, perfect and Strait
I know not its birth or yet its date.

THE CHURCH.

In it the sinner finds relief
So it was with the penitent Thief
Our holy Lord spoke mild and nice
Saying this day you'll be in Paradise
A splendid flock on Sunday shine
Accompanied by their good Divine
His holy steps they do pursue
Until he leads them to the Pue.
The holy Scriptures he does Unfold
As precious as pure links of Gold
The world all they must admit
That it is the Revd Mr Smyth.
In it you'll find the Holy Bible
Seek and find do not be idle—
Let any honest Protestant
Consider this a Covenant—
In the Gospel it is spoken
Knock at the door and it will open.
Its Gothic Arch and massy walls
Do far exceed the Great St Paul's
A splendid roof of Noble Oak
With which brave Noah built the Ark
The spire top salute the sky
And the whistling winds it do defy.
Right overhangs the Ravens nest
And from the storms is at Rest
The Curate is good Mr Hopkins
Who feeds his flock & soothes their Lamplings
He is of the race of Noble Lords
And in Heaven I hope will get reward
A lovely Cottage stands hard by
That does arrest the Travellers eye
The little Warblers round it sing
All praising God their potent king
The fleet Hare, the Fox and Hound
Are started at the Huntsmans sound
All passes thro' that spacious Lawn
Accompanied by the active Fawn
The Weak, The Lame The Blind the Poor
Are often found at the Hall door
That it may stand for many an age
Which terminates my little Page

Excuse Revd Sir, and do not blame
The honest Bard from Enniskeane.

JOHN CROWLY.

One more curiosity of our post-office, and I have done: it is a genuine epistle, sent by an emigrant country schoolmaster to a friend at home:

‘MR M CONNORS

With congruous gratitude and decorum I accost to you this debonnaire communication. And announce to you with amicable Complacency that we continually enjoy competent laudable good health, thanks to our omnipotent Father for it. We are endowed with the

momentous prerogatives of respectable operations of a supplement concuity of having a fine brave and gallant youthful daughter the pendency ladies age is four months at this date, we denominated her Margaret Connolly.

I have to respond to the Communication and accost and remit a Convoy revealing with your identity candour and sincerity. If your brother who had been pristinely located and stationed in England whether if he has induced himself with Ecstasy to be in preparation to progress with you. I am paid by the respectable potent loyal nobleman that I work for one dollar per day. Announce to me in what Concuity the crops and the products of husbandry dignify, also predict how is Jno. Carroll and his wife and family. My brother and Myself are continually employed and occupied in similar work. Living and doing good. Dictate how Jno. Mahony wife and family is.

Don't you permit oblivion to obstruct you from inserting this. Prognosticate how Mrs Harrington is and if she accept my intelligence or any convoy from either of Her 2 progenies since their embarkation for this nation. If she has please specify with congruous and elysian gratitude with validity and veracity to my magnanimous self.

I remit my respects to my former friends and acquaintances. I remain D. CONNOLLY.

P.S. Direct your Epistle to Pembroke state of Maine.

Dear brother-in-law

I am determined and candidly arrive at Corolary, as I am fully resolved to transfer a sufficient portion of money to you to recompense your liabilities from thence to hence. I hope your similar operations will not impede any occurrence that might obstruct your progression on or at the specified time the 17th of March next.

COLLEGE-LIFE IN FINLAND.*

THERE is no great difficulty in becoming a member of the university of Finland. The only conditions are, that the candidate shall be provided with a certificate as to his moral and intellectual character, furnished by the head of the preparatory school he has attended; and that he pass through an examination before a committee consisting of a dean of divinity and two assistants who are elected every year by the consistory. These interrogate him on the history of the church, the principles of Christianity, logic, moral philosophy, arithmetic, geometry, history, geography, and belles-lettres; and if his answers are sufficiently satisfactory to justify the words *approbatur*, *approbatur cum laude*, or *laudatur*, he is at once admitted as a member of the college.

The only fee demanded upon admission is twenty-two rubles, or about L.2, 10s. Candidates who have previously studied in the universities or gymnasiums of Russia, may dispense with this examination, it being sufficient for them to produce their diplomas: but this happens rarely.

The gates of the college, however, were not always so freely opened to students. In former years, if we may believe the *Sieur de la Mottraye*, aspirants to the honour of membership were exposed even to absurd and painful tests. ‘On the day of their enrolment,’ he says, ‘all the aspirants to the title of student being assembled in one room, an officer of the academy, named the trustee, advances towards them, and amid the gibes and laughter of those around, blackens the face of each, fastens a pair of long ears or horns to his hat, the rim of which is straightened out, thrusts into each corner of his mouth a long hook or tusk, which

* The Round Tower of Kinneigh.

* From *L'Empereur Alexandre II. Par M. Léonson. Le Due: Paris.*

he is obliged to hold between his teeth like a couple of small tobacco-pipes, and throws a long black cloak over his shoulders. In this ridiculous disguise, even more monstrous than that with which the victims of the Inquisition are invested, the young men are marched out of the room, and into another crowded with spectators, the officer driving them before him with a stick, headed with a small hatchet, as a drover might a number of oxen or asses. He here arranges them into a circle, measuring and equalising them with his stick, like a sergeant dressing his soldiers, at the same time distorting his face into innumerable grimaces, and making them mute reverences; anon, he rallies them upon their strange apparel, and then changing his tone, he sternly charges them with every vice or error common to youth, and points out how these must be corrected, punished, and done away with, by the study of belles-lettres. Then changing again from serious to burlesque, or rather tragi-comedy, he asks them several questions, which they are obliged to answer; but on account of the tusks placed between their teeth, they cannot do this distinctly, but grunt out their replies like an army of young pigs, which draws down a reprimand from him, and he applies the appropriate epithet to them, administering at the same time some slight blows about their shoulders with his stick, or striking them with his gloves. He tells them the tusks signify intemperance, the debauches of young men, who, while eating and drinking to excess, obscure the mind as well as overload the stomach. Then drawing from a sort of juggler's bag a pair of wooden pincers, that open and shut with a zigzag motion, he seizes them by the neck, and shakes and jerks the instrument till the tusks fall to the ground; telling them, that if they prove docile pupils, willing to profit by the teaching of the academy, they will thus throw off their penchant for intemperance and gluttony. Pulling off the long ears, he says they must apply earnestly to study, or they will resemble the animal to which these appendages belong; and, lastly, he removes the horns, which are symbolical of ferocity and brutality, and taking a plane from the bag, he makes them all lie down upon their faces by turns, while he planes them from top to toe, to indicate that in the same manner belles-lettres will polish their understanding. After a few more similar absurdities, the farce is ended by the officer taking a large vessel full of water, and pouring it over the bare heads of the students till they are drenched to the skin, and wiping their faces roughly with a coarse towel. He then winds up with an address, exhorting them to lead a new life, and to throw off every evil habit from their minds, as they have just done the grotesque habiliments of the body; and declaring them now free students of the academy, on condition that they continue to wear the long cloak for six months; that they go every day, each to those of his own province, to the students who have been previously enrolled, and offer their services to them, whether in the chamber or the auberge; that they obey every order they receive, and submit without a murmur to every reproach and sarcasm that may be offered them; and that, finally, they consent to being called by the name of *criminals*.

The greater number of the students of Helsingfors are poor, but they submit to the misfortune courageously and honourably; and there is no great demand upon the purse in a place where, as is the case even in the capital of Finland, lodging and victuals are cheap, every kind of merchandise of moderate price, where appearances are not much thought of, and where they have no such temptations as the Parisian student is subject to—no *Chaumières*, no *Prado*, nor any other such place of recreation and amusement. Still, theirs is not an altogether melancholy life; and many a heart in the Quartier Latin weaves bright visions of romance even out of the tedium of study, and the dry details of

their hard life. The Finland student resembles the German in many respects—the same impulsiveness, the same recklessness of the future, characterise him. The happiest period of his existence is when the paternal letter arrives containing his eagerly looked for quarterly pension. Then it is that friends are called to the banquet; then are innumerable pipes smoked, cups of tea swallowed, bowls of punch concocted; and then champagne foams, and rubles go. But never mind; he returns again to his studies when the money is spent, and waits patiently for the next glimpse of happiness, and of rubles. And so the quiet life of the student of Helsingfors passes on, alternating from laborious days of solitude and reflection to those of gaiety and oblivion, or of a do-nothingism which the most accomplished *lazzaroni* might envy.

Our student goes seldom into private society, but then he is the spirit of every public fête. As soon as May is in, he hurries out to the suburbs of the town, and with cheers and toasts, and libations of hydromel, celebrates the death of winter and the birth of flowers. With his presence, life and animation flow into the balls at the *Hôtel de la Société*; he frequents the promenade, directs the representations at the theatre, and applauds its actors; or appears upon the boards at the concerts, and takes his part, without regard to public respect or self-esteem. It is true, these amusements sometimes end in a brawl in the midst, although if the voice of some beloved master is heard, he at once becomes quiet and tractable.

The students of Helsingfors are divided, like those of Upsal and Lund, into nations or classes. Each nation has a special place of meeting, where the members keep their little library, where every one brings his book for study, or musical instrument, and there beguiles the time with reading, playing, or arguing. Every nation has at its head one of the professors of the college, who takes the class under his peculiar protection, and is appealed to on all occasions for advice and direction. There exists a very clannish feeling among these tribes; but, although of a very ardent nature, it never leads to any serious result. Every year the members unite in getting up a fête. The rector of the university, the professor, and all the members of the nation, are expected to be present at the feast. Compositions in prose and verse are recited, and toasts drunk in honour of the institution and its directors; and the lively flow of conversation never flags till the hour for breaking up, when the enjoyments of the evening are ended by the proposal of a general health to all the members of the nation.

These nations are entitled to some very peculiar privileges. One of the principal of these is the right of admitting or rejecting any student desirous of becoming a member of the college, without being obliged to assign any reason for it. If the candidate, after applying successively to each nation, and being refused by all, still persists in entering the college, under favour of the directors, it is at his peril. He henceforth leads an isolated existence; is looked upon as the *Paria* of the society; and his life is rendered bitter by the continual persecutions and hatred of his brother-students, who are determined to force him, sooner or later, to resign. To prevent these dissensions, the directors either approve of and confirm the rejection of the nations, or else oblige them, by their advice and representations, to reconsider their verdict, and reverse their decision. A case of this description occurred in 1844, to an ex-student of St Petersburg.

The most imposing ceremony that takes place within the walls of the university of Finland, is the election of the masters and doctors. This occurs every three years. On that day, the students perform a drama composed for the occasion, and the rector gives a grand dinner, furnished by the rules of the academy. It must consist of not more than six plain dishes, besides ham

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and butter; no pastry, but simply cheese; and for liquors, Finland beer and a little French wine. If the rector chooses, he may invite the printers and bookbinders, but no female whatever, not even the wives of the professors; and the banquet must not be prolonged to the next day. The last of the regulations might create some suspicion as to the sobriety of the guests, but there is, fortunately, no instance of excess known.

The odd proceedings belong to a by-gone age, but all the details connected with the installation of the doctors retain their ancient solemnity. Professor Grote describes in what manner the ceremony was conducted in 1840. 'Four days,' he says, 'were set apart for the election of the doctors of the four faculties. All the members of the university go in procession, two and two, to the high church of St Nicholas, where the public are already assembled; a continual firing of cannon and bursts of music are kept up, accompanied by the enthusiastic shouts of the populace. Having entered the church, the candidates form around the pulpit, from which the individual who elects them pronounces an appropriate discourse. After this, one of the assistants of the college proposes a scientific question, to which the *premier* replies. Then the form of the oath is read in Latin, and each candidate confirms it by placing two fingers upon a baton presented to him by one of the soldiers. The election now takes place. The elector first covers himself with his own doctor's cap, and then places it successively upon the head of every one of the candidates; all the doctors present, at the same time, putting on their caps—black, blue, or red, according to the faculty—and presents them with a gold ring, as a symbol of their being now united to science, as well as a copy of the Bible to the doctors of theology, a sword to the others, and to all the diploma of the university. Whilst these tokens were being distributed, strains of music fill the church, and the solemn roar of the cannon resounds without. The ceremony ended, the *dernier* makes a speech of thanks to the assembly, with a particular address to the ladies in verse.'

The election of the masters is a still more solemn affair—or, at anyrate, a more popular one; and it is natural it should be so, when it is remembered, that on this occasion it is not the veterans of science who have finished their probation, but youths just entered upon their career, who are now about to taste the fruits of their labours, and be recompensed for the sacrifices of their family. The ceremony is the same as on the installation of doctors, only that a laurel-crown replaces the cap. The young masters wear the crown all day, walking the streets hat in hand; and at the grand ball given by the town in the evening, it still adorns their brows, marking them out for no little distinction and admiration. According to a good old custom, the candidate may choose from the whole town a maiden distinguished for her modesty, beauty, and rank, to weave his crown with her own fair fingers. It is presented to him on the day of election, in the name of all the electees, and the young lady appears at the ball with her dress decorated with laurel leaves.

In 1643, the university of Finland celebrated the election of its masters for the first time. The same spirit of austere morality that dictated the ceremonies of its membership, were in full action on this occasion. Several of the students merited by their learning the dignity of being masters, but the consistory did not find them sufficiently pure in *vita et moribus*, and allowed them to compete for the prize, but did not confer it upon them. One student who had the misfortune to compose some verses, was enjoined to renounce such folly, and not to go about the town spouting stanzas and rhymes that conferred little honour upon the academy. But a much more serious charge than this was brought home to the students in

1661, when one of them stood accused of sorcery. It is true, no one had ever seen him in the exercise of any act of witchcraft, no cabalistic figures or conjuring-book had been discovered in his room, and no witness could testify to having seen him ride away on a broomstick to keep his unhallowed sabbath; but he had made astonishing progress in oriental languages, and he had taught a comrade Latin in so short a time, as clearly shewed he must have had dealings with the Evil One; and the whole consistory, with the bishop at its head, condemned him to death. The poor wretch escaped the punishment of his crime through the intervention of Count de Brahé, who, without contradicting the wisdom of the judges, observed that even if the accused was guilty of the dreadful crime imputed to him, still the shame of his sentence and the severities of his prison were a sufficient punishment. Nine years afterwards, another student, accused of the same misdemeanour, was simply expelled for ever from the academy.

At the present day, though the discipline of the consistory is more in accordance with our ideas of reason, yet they make the title of master no less difficult to obtain than formerly. It is frightful even to think what the university exacts of a young man before he may hope to encircle his brows with the academical laurel. He is examined in the following branches:—geometry, arithmetic, algebra, the application of algebra to geometry; trigonometry, plane and spherical; conic sections; the theory of curved lines, calculations differential and integral; Newmann's natural philosophy; astronomy, organic and inorganic; chemistry, with principles of analysis; mineralogy; Hegel's encyclopedia, natural history.

The examination in the divers branches of the faculty of philosophy lasts from a month and a half to two months, during which time the student has two or three meetings to attend every week; and it is necessary, in order to be admitted, that he receives for each of these branches one of the three words of approval, *approbatur*, *approbatur cum laude*, or *laudatur*. A written examination precedes the oral one. It is carried on in Latin, and is comprised in two exercises. The first is to shew the style of the candidate; the other, his method of developing his ideas and of treating the subject. The written examination is subject to the same conditions as the other. No dispensation is ever granted unless for the oriental languages, for which it can be obtained readily enough, especially if the applicant can prove a thorough knowledge of the Russian language.

ASSIMILATION OF THERMOMETERS.

THERE are three instruments in common use bearing the name of thermometer, which, though all constructed on the same principle—namely, on the change of bulk which bodies undergo by alterations of temperature—differ materially from each other in the graduation of their respective scales.

1. Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit, a native of Danzig, its reputed inventor, has lent his name to that used in this country, in North America, and Holland.

2. Reaumur's thermometer, though now not much used, except in Spain and some other continental states, is entitled to attention, as supplying us with the terms in which numerous and very valuable observations and experiments are recorded.

3. The thermometer of Celsius—the *thermomètre centigrade* of the French chemists—differs but little from that of Reaumur.

The confusion and embarrassment which are produced by this difference in the graduation of so popular an instrument, seem to render a universal thermometer almost as desirable an object as a universal language. In the absence of this desideratum, we have, for the use of those of our readers who are also readers of

French or German books, and who have no doubt been frequently misled or arrested in their progress by conflicting quotations of the degrees of heat, constructed the following table, and annexed a rule by which the degrees of Reaumur and Celsius may, with the greatest facility, be in all cases reduced to those of Fahrenheit:—

Reaumur.	Centigrade.	Fahrenheit.	Reaumur.	Centigrade.	Fahrenheit.
Boiling-points.			20	25	77
80	100	212	15	20	68
76	95	203	12	15	59
72	90	194	8	10	50
68	85	185	4	5	41
64	80	176	0	0	32
60	75	167	Freezing-points.		
56	70	158	-4	-5	23
52	65	149	-8	-10	14
48	60	140	-12	-15	5
44	55	131	-16	-20	-4
40	50	122	-20	-25	-13
36	45	113	-24	-30	-22
32	40	104	-28	-35	-31
28	35	95	-32	-40	-40
24	30	86	-36	-45	-49

Rule.—To convert degrees of Reaumur into those of Fahrenheit, multiply by 9, divide by 4, and add 32 to, or subtract 32 from, the quotient as the degrees are positive or negative. Thus,

$$\frac{28^{\circ} \times 9}{4} + 32 = 95^{\circ}, \text{ and } \frac{-28^{\circ} \times 9}{4} - 32 = -31^{\circ}.$$

And to convert degrees of Celsius into those of Fahrenheit, multiply by 9, divide by 5, and add 32 to, or subtract 32 from, the quotient as the degrees are positive or negative. Thus,

$$\frac{35^{\circ} \times 9}{5} + 32 = 95^{\circ}, \text{ and } \frac{-35^{\circ} \times 9}{5} - 32 = -31^{\circ}.$$

INNS OF COURT.

The Inns of Court are themselves sufficiently peculiar to give a strong distinctive mark to the locality in which they exist; for here are seen broad open squares like huge courtyards, paved and treeless, and flanked with grubby mansions—as big and cheerless-looking as barracks—every one of them being destitute of doors, and having a string of names painted in stripes upon the door-posts, that reminds one of the lists displayed at an estate-agent's office, and there is generally a chapel-like edifice called the 'hall,' that is devoted to feeding rather than praying, and where the lawyerlings 'qualify' for the bar by eating so many dinners; and become at length—gastronomically—'learned in the law.' Then how peculiar are the tidy legal gardens attached to the principal Inns, with their close-shaven grassplots looking as sleek and bright as so much green plush, and the clean-swept gravel-walks thronged with children, and nursemaids, and law-students. How odd, too, are the desolate-looking legal alleys or courts adjoining these Inns, with nothing but a pump or a cane-bearing street-keeper to be seen in the midst of them, and occasionally at one corner, beside a crypt-like passage, a stray dark and dingy barber's shop, with its seedy display of powdered horsehair wigs of the same dirty-white hue as London snow. Who, moreover, has not noted the windows of the legal fruiterers and law-stationers hereabouts, stuck over with small announcements of clerkships wanted, each penned in the well-known formidable straight-up-and-down three-and-fourpenny hand, and beginning—with a 'This-inbenture'-like flourish of German text—'The Writer herref,' &c.? Who, too, while threading his way through the monastic-like by-ways of such places, has not been startled to find himself suddenly light upon a small enclosure, comprising a tree or two, and a little circular pool, hardly bigger than a lawyer's inkstand, with a so-called fountain in the centre, squirting up the water in one long thick thread, as if it were the nozzle of a fire-engine?—*Mayhew's Great World of London.*

* This was the greatest degree of cold felt by Sir John Franklin and his companions, on that navigator's second Expedition to the Arctic Sea.

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

MUSE—genius—fay—that lov'st to dwell
Where shades are deep, and waters bright,
Where birds are singing soft and well,
And where the heart is light!
Far from thy haunts we exorcise
Each thing of sad or sullen hue,
Far, far we ban from those pure eyes
Each vice and folly too.
For thou consortest not with wo,
Nor sloth, nor vice, nor earth-born care,
For thou art purer than the flow
Of summer's purest air.
The low, the guilty, cannot bear
The look of beauty and of worth,
The majesty thy features wear,
Not born of rule or earth.
Genius with thee, and holy Truth,
And heavenly Musing love to bide,
Thine the soft hours of virtuous youth,
Thine life's soft eventide.
At times there kindle in thy dreams
Some sparks of a diviner lore,
At times excurive, vastest themes
Thy light wing flashes o'er:
Thus when the king of minstrels sung,
Achilles in his museful mood,
When o'er the trembling lyre he hung
In his proud solitude—
Think you the hero slumbered then?
No! for his soul was far away;
It dashed amid the press of men,
And grappled in the fray.
'Tis thus thy shades are Academes
Of lofty thought and high emprise,
And to great actions from thy dreams
Heroes and sages rise.
O be it mine to wax in worth,
Taught by thy lessons wise as fair,
And thus solidify on earth
Thy Castles in the Air!

H. M. JUNR.

COLD.

For every mile that we leave the surface of our earth, the temperature falls 5 degrees. At forty-five miles' distance from the globe we get beyond the atmosphere, and enter, strictly speaking, into the regions of space, whose temperature is 225 degrees below zero; and here cold reigns in all its power. Some idea of this intense cold may be formed by stating that the greatest cold observed in the Arctic Circle is from 40 degrees to 60 degrees below zero; and here many surprising effects are produced. In the chemical laboratory, the greatest cold that we can produce is about 150 degrees below zero. At this temperature, carbonic gas becomes a solid substance, like snow. If touched, it produces just the same effect on the skin as a red-hot cinder; it blisters the finger like a burn. Quicksilver or mercury freezes at 40 degrees below zero; that is, 72 degrees below the temperature at which water freezes. The solid mercury may then be treated as other metals, hammered into sheets, or made into spoons; such spoons would, however, melt in water as warm as ice. It is pretty certain that every liquid and gas that we are acquainted with would become solid if exposed to the cold of the regions of space. The gas we light our streets with would appear like wax; oil would be in reality 'as hard as a rock'; pure spirit, which we have never yet solidified, would appear like a block of transparent crystal; hydrogen gas would become quite solid, and resemble a metal; we should be able to turn butter in a lathe like a piece of ivory; and the fragrant odours of flowers would have to be made hot before they would yield perfume. These are a few of the astonishing effects of cold.—*Septimus Piesse*

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